

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-28. (Canceled).

29. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a data store comprising:
generating a plurality of records, wherein each record pertains to a respective one of a plurality of users ~~including a first user, a second user and a third user~~, wherein each record comprises a searchable identifier, and a linkable identifier, and wherein ~~each~~ a record ~~of the first user~~ includes
a first field for holding data about the ~~first user~~ to whom the particular record pertains,
a second field for holding data about at least one ~~second~~ other user, obtained from a database of the ~~first user~~ to whom the particular record pertains, and
a third field for holding linkable data referring to a record of at least one further other ~~third~~ user, based on presence of data about the further other ~~third~~ user in the ~~database of the~~ second field of the first user to whom the particular record pertains and/or presence of data about the first user to whom the particular record pertains in a ~~database~~ second field of the record of the further other ~~third~~ user, and
identifying the records of the ~~first user~~ to whom the particular record pertains and the ~~third~~ further other user as linked records.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of generating a data store according to claim 29 wherein the searchable identifier is a user identifier, and the linkable identifier one or more of user addresses, telephone numbers, or mobile telephone numbers.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of generating a data store according to claim 29 wherein the database of the ~~first~~ user to whom the particular record pertains comprises an address book.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of generating a data store according to claim 29 further including the step of ascribing a weighting to a linked record.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of generating a data store system comprising a plurality of records, each record being generated and linked using the method of claim 29 wherein the step of identifying linked records comprises identifying reciprocal links for inclusion in the third field of each record identified as including a linkable identifier to and/or from the other.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of searching a data store system generated by the method of claim 33 in response to a request from a ~~first~~ user to whom the particular record pertains based on a specified searchable identifier, comprising

searching for the searchable identifier

in the second and third fields of the record of the ~~first~~ user to whom the particular record pertains, and

in other records, and

compiling a list of any or all user records which include the searchable identifier.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 34 wherein the step of searching for the searchable identifier comprises searching for the searchable identifier in the other records only if the searchable identifier is not found in the second and third fields of the record of the ~~first~~ user to whom the particular record pertains.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 34 wherein the searching step comprises searching for the searchable identifier in all other records, or a pre-specified set of other records.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 36 wherein the searching step comprises searching for the searchable identifier in a pre-specified set of other records which are a pre-specified link distance from the user record of the ~~first~~ user to whom the particular record pertains.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 34 the listing step comprises ordering the list in accordance with link distance between a particular record and the record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 34 wherein the listing step further comprises ranking the listed records.

40. (Currently Amended) The method of searching a data store system according to claim 34 the listing step comprises ordering the list in accordance with link distance between a particular record and the record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains.

41. (Currently Amended) A data store generating apparatus comprising record generation means for automatedly generating a plurality of records, wherein each record pertains to a respective one of a plurality of users ~~including a first user, a second user and a third user~~, wherein each record comprises a searchable identifier and a linkable identifier, wherein a ~~each~~ record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains includes

a first field for holding data about the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains,

a second field for holding data about at least one ~~second other~~ user, obtained from a database of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains, and

a third field for holding linkable data referring to a record of at least one further other user, based on presence of data about the further other ~~third~~ user in the second field of the record~~database~~ of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains and/or presence of data about the first-user to whom the particular record pertains in a second field of the record~~database~~ of the further other ~~third~~-user, and,

link identification means for automatedly identifying the records of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains and the further other ~~third~~-user as linked records.

42. (Previously Presented) The data store generating apparatus according to claim 41 wherein the searchable identifier is a user identifier, and the linkable identifier one or more of user addresses, telephone numbers, or mobile telephone numbers.

43. (Currently Amended) The data store generating apparatus according to claim 41 wherein the database of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains comprises an address book.

44. (Previously Presented) The data store generating apparatus according to claim 41 further including weighting means to ascribe a weighting to a linked record.

45. (Previously Presented) A data store system comprising a plurality of records, each record being generated and linked using the data store generating apparatus of claim 41, wherein the link identification means is arranged in use to identify reciprocal links for inclusion in the third field, of each record identified as including a linkable identifier to and/or from the other.

46. (Currently Amended) A data store searching apparatus for searching the data store system of claim 45 in response to a request from a first-user to whom the particular record pertains based on a specified searchable identifier, the apparatus comprising

searching means for searching for the searchable identifier

in the second and third fields of the record of the first-user to whom the particular record pertains, and

in other records, and

listing means to compile a list of any or all user records which include the searchable identifier.

47. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus of claim 46 wherein the searching means is arranged in use to search for the searchable identifier in the other records only if the searchable identifier is not found in the second and third fields of the record of the first-user to whom the particular record pertains.

48. (Previously Presented) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the searching means is arranged to search for the searchable identifier in all other records, or a pre-specified set of other records.

49. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 48 wherein the searching means is arranged to search for the searchable identifier in a pre-specified set of other records which are a pre-specified link distance from the user record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains.

50. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the listing means is arranged in use to order the list in accordance with link distance between a particular record and the record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains.

51. (Previously Presented) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the listing means is further arranged to rank the listed records.

52. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 51 wherein the listing means is arranged to rank each of the listed user records based on at least one of its weighting, its link distance from the record of the ~~first-user~~ to whom the particular record pertains, or its frequency of occurrence in the list.

53. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 46 further including retrieving means for identifying a record in dependence on its rank, and for retrieving information relating to the identified record for presentation to the first-user to whom the particular record pertains.

54. (Currently Amended) The data store searching apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the listing means is arranged to rank each of the listed user records based on at least one of its weighting, its link distance from the record of the first-user to whom the particular record pertains, or its frequency of occurrence in the list.